

Opening Statement

Good morning Chairman McDonald, Chairman Lawlor, other distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee.

My name is Chuey Kwak. It is an honor and a privilege to appear before you today. I am extremely grateful to Governor Rell for entrusting me with a nomination for a judgeship. I am also very grateful to my family and friends for their love, encouragement and support. I live in West Hartford with my wife Yong, my wonderful children Selah and Nathan, who are here today. Selah is a junior and Nathan is a freshman at Hall High School. I would also like to thank my mom, my sisters and my friends, some of whom are also here.

I moved to East Hartford with my family in 1973 and have been a resident of the State, ever since. I attended public schools and graduated from George J. Penney High School in 1981. After high school, I was fortunate enough to be accepted to the United States Military Academy at West Point and I graduated in 1985 and received my commission as a 2LT in the Army as a Field Artillery officer.

My primary reason for attending West Point was my intense desire to serve our great nation as an officer in the Army, which was my contribution and my way of giving back to the nation for the opportunities that were afforded to me; opportunities that otherwise would not have been available, had I stayed in Korea. I am proud of being an American and, without being boastful, for my service in the Army.

I resigned my commission after serving in the first Gulf War. I returned to Connecticut to start a new career and also to start a family. I attended the University of Connecticut School of Law and was fortunate to receive a tuition waiver due to my service in Desert Storm. I am very grateful to the legislature for giving me that opportunity. One of my goals when I attended law school was to become a judge and to serve the State of Connecticut. I love living in Connecticut. I have traveled to a number of other countries and states, while serving in the Army and I am convinced that Connecticut is one of the best places to raise a family.

During law school and after graduation, I worked for several law firms, mostly in civil litigation in medical malpractice defense, insurance defense and class actions. I have represented both plaintiffs and defendants and I believe I have a good perspective regarding the issues facing both sides of the bar. I was also assistant general counsel for a company in the healthcare industry.

As a law student, I mediated disputes in the Housing Court and consumer disputes in conjunction with the Department of Consumer Protection and represented an indigent mother in a termination of parental rights action in Family Court. Recently, I became more involved in healthcare law and served in various roles as in-house attorney dealing in healthcare regulatory matters and managing medical malpractice and general liability suits.

My most recent position was as a consultant for a medical risk management company that works with a number of hospitals, physician groups and insurance carriers to provide education to physicians and other clinicians to improve patient safety and outcomes. I believe my broad experience will be an asset in dealing with all parties in a suit.

Community service is important to me and I serve as a board member of the Community Division of the Hartt School of Music, Dance, Theater, and also as a board member of the West Hartford Girls Soccer League. I have also coached for a number of years in Little League baseball and softball and the West Hartford Girls Soccer League and West Hartford Youth Soccer Association. I also referee soccer games on the weekends.

I am proud of my heritage, but I would like to be judged by my worth and deeds rather than my status as member of a particular ethnic group. If I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, I will treat everyone with fairness, impartiality and I will maintain the dignity and proper decorum of the bench.

Chairman McDonald, Chairman Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee, I thank you again for the opportunity to be heard and for your consideration.

I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.